

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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CONTACT: Israel Klein
or Mark Bayer
202-225-2836

FIRST RESPONDERS IN 7TH DISTRICT SAY FEDS NOT DOING ALL IT CAN TO PROTECT HOMETOWN SECURITY

REP. MARKEY, DEMS RELEASE LOCAL AND NATIONAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON, DC— Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, joined with the House Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security to release a nationwide survey of local officials, which demonstrates the wide disconnect between what the Federal government is doing and what is needed. Rep. Markey additionally released his own report surveying the local officials of the 7th Congressional District, which reflects the same concerns as those expressed in the national survey.

Rep. Markey stated, "The Bush Administration is writing a blank check for security in Iraq while it is nickel and dime-ing our first responders here at home. Not a single local official in my district who responded to this survey feels that the Bush Administration is doing all it can do for our hometown security. Local officials in my home district do not feel adequately prepared for a biological or chemical terrorist attack."

"From Winthrop to Framingham, from Belmont to Woburn, it is clear that there are serious funding gaps regarding personnel, communications, and training. One clear example is the lack of adequate, interoperable radios and communications devices – a cell phone should not be the only way that police chiefs can communicate with each other during a terrorist strike," Rep. Markey continued. "Our first responders work overtime in dangerous situations to protect us – right now, Republicans are planning to cut overtime pay for some of these very same first responders in the labor appropriations bill."

"While the President signed the Homeland Security spending bill giving \$5 billion to first responders, the non-partisan Council on Foreign Relations estimates that the Federal government would need to increase by five times its annual spending for first responders to meet our current security needs."

The local and national surveys as well as more information on homeland security can be found at www.house.gov/markey.

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